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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS

Each November of POETRY's history has brought to the members of its staff the agreeable duty of awarding two or more prizes. When the magazine began, prizes in this art were practically unheard-of in America, although annual prizes and scholarships in painting, sculpture, architecture and music have been common. The editors believed, and still believe, in these awards, both as a stimulus to the artists and a kind of advertisement of the art before the public. We believe that they are as well deserved, and as effective for these purposes, in poetry as in the other arts, and we rejoice that the example of the magazine is being followed by the Poetry Society of America, through Columbia University, and that other institutions and individuals are at least considering the bestowal of such awards.

Compared with other artists the poet, as everyone knows, is absurdly ill-paid. POETRY is, we believe, almost the only one of the special magazines which has been able to pay anything to its contributors, yet we should hate to expose the ridiculous smallness of our checks for such far-famed poems of the past six years as Rupert Brooke's war sonnets and Joyce Kilmer's *Trees*; or—among poets now living—for six of Tagore's *Gitanjali*, or for *Ego Dominus Tuus* by Mr. Yeats, *General Booth* by Mr. Lindsay, *Silence* by Mr. Masters, *Songs out of Stress* by Sara Teasdale, and many others: ridiculous, compared with the five, eight, even ten thousand dollars paid to our contemporary painters and sculptors of equal

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rank for a single work of no greater beauty and inherent value. Nor will the few prizes offered in this art bear comparison with the numerous and extremely large awards to painters and sculptors in our various large cities—for example, thirty-four hundred dollars in five prizes, accompanied by gold, silver and bronze medals, at a single annual exhibition of the Chicago Art Institute!

POETRY would like to change all this—it would like to be rich enough to pay for poems at least a living wage, so that poets would not have to face the grim alternative of starving or getting an engrossing and art-destroying job. The editors constantly run up against cases of poignant suffering caused by this condition—suffering which, far from enriching the poet's art, tends to stifle it altogether. They could dispose of thousands a year to individuals who desperately need the money, and whose talent gives them fully as much right to it as the numerous American art students have who enjoy local or travelling scholarships, or even large allowances, with studio and residence, from the American Academy at Rome.

At this point, to enforce my argument, the postman hands me a letter from Sara Teasdale, who recently received the Poetry Society's five-hundred-dollar prize. She tells of the soul-destroying struggles of one or two young poet friends, and adds:

I wish that you would write an editorial about Crowder's dictum that poets are essential to the nation's well-being. So far so good. But *how* is a poet to live on his work? Did Gen. Crowder or any of these other patriotic people and organizations who continually write to poets for verses (to be furnished free for patriotic causes) ever consider that point? If a poet makes \$500 a year on his poems,

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he is doing well. Most of the "laity" have no idea how small the sums paid to poets are. If they knew, I think there might be some patriotic and generous millionaires who would come forward with more prizes, endowments and what not.

One chief trouble is that the short-story writers and their publishers make a point of advertising the huge sums paid to successful short-story writers. Therefore the unsuspecting laity think that poets fare equally well. An eager lady asked a friend of mine quite confidentially the other day, "Sara Teasdale gets about a thousand dollars for each of her poems, doesn't she?"

And the New York *Sun*, discussing Joyce Kilmer's career, says:

We ask that our poets, above all people, should be wise. But we are told that Wisdom comes with leisure, and books and children about her knee. The young poet of to-day has scant enough of the first; the second he has no chance to enjoy, and the children are apt to represent so many mouths to be fed. . . .

A poetry born of conditions prevalent to-day is apt to be thin: how otherwise, when there is so little time for ripe thought and thick packing? It is apt to lack sustaining power; how else, when the creator comes to his task already fagged from the world's work? It is apt to lack careful workmanship: time is so scarce. And it will fail often to afford that escape from our muddy prison that the poet should offer us: the world is too much with him.

Well, we must change all that, and, for a beginning, it would be impossible to over-state our feeling of gratitude to the two guarantors of POETRY who have given annual prizes during the past five years, as well as to others who have given occasional prizes. They are pioneers in a good cause, and it is our firm belief that their generosity will so leaven the public mind as to give rise to a long list of successors. POETRY, as we have often said, is a current exhibition; no more than in other current exhibitions can we hope to show numerous masterpieces, or to manifest impeccable justice in

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our awards. Human judgment is notoriously fallible, but such as it is, it must be our guide.

With this preliminary, the editorial staff of POETRY has the honor of announcing the three prizes awarded to poems printed in POETRY during its sixth year—October, 1917, to September, 1918, inclusive.

Poems by members of the jury—in this case *New Mexico Songs*, by Alice Corbin, and *Carolina Wood-cuts*, by Harriet Monroe—are withdrawn from competition. And Mr. Yeats having declined—November, 1913,—POETRY'S earliest prize award on the magnanimous ground that prizes should go to younger poets, we must regard his beautiful poem, *Ego Dominus Tuus* (October, 1917) as *hors concours*. Also, the jury has not been able to consider as a possibility awarding the Levinson Prize to anyone who has previously received it, although *Prairie* by Carl Sandburg, *Canticle of the Race* by Edgar Lee Masters, and *The Empire of China Is Crumbling Down* by Vachel Lindsay, would otherwise have been considered, and are herewith most honorably mentioned. Translations are also exempt from competition for prizes, although this year has been fortunate in four translations of such special distinction that we have mentioned them below in a separate list.

THE HELEN HAIRE LEVINSON PRIZE of two hundred dollars for a poem or group of poems by a citizen of the United States, is awarded to

MR. JOHN CURTIS UNDERWOOD

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of New York and New Mexico, for his Serbian war poem, *The Song of the Cheechas*, printed in the June number.

This prize was founded in 1913 by Mr. Salmon O. Levinson of Chicago. Previous awards have been as follows:

1914—Carl Sandburg, for *Chicago Poems*.

1915—Vachel Lindsay, for *The Chinese Nightingale*.

1916—Edgar Lee Masters, for *All Life in a Life*.

1917—Cloyd Head, for *Grotesques*.

The prize of one hundred dollars, offered by an anonymous guarantor for a poem, or group of poems, without distinction of nationality, is awarded to

MR. AJAN SYRIAN

of New York, for his group of Syrian and Armenian war poems, *From the Near East*, in the August number.

(Our readers will note the odd coincidence by which both these prizes go to poems of the war.)

This prize, or other prizes similar in intent, have been previously awarded as follows:

1913—Vachel Lindsay, for *General Booth Enters into Heaven*.

1915—Constance Lindsay Skinner, for *Songs of the Coast-dwellers*.

1915—"H. D.," for *Poems*.

1916—John Gould Fletcher, for *Arizona Poems*.

1917—Robert Frost, for *Snow*.

In addition to these two annuals, another guarantor of the magazine offers this year a prize of fifty dollars for a poem,

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or group of poems, by a young beginner in the art. This prize is awarded to a twenty-year-old poet of unusual promise,

MR. EMANUEL CARNEVALI

of New York, for his group, *The Splendid Commonplace*, printed in the March number.

Three other special prizes, of one hundred dollars each, have been previously awarded: to Louise Driscoll, for *Metal-Checks*, as the best poem of the war received in competition and printed in our War Number of November, 1914; to Wallace Stevens, for *Three Travellers Watch a Sunrise*, adjudged the best one-act poetic play received in a prize contest—July, 1916; and to Muna Lee, for numbers III, IV and VII of her group, *Footnotes* (January, 1916), the prize having been offered by Mrs. Julius Rosenwald for a lyric poem or poems by a young poet, printed in *POETRY* during its fourth year.

Besides the above three awards, the following poems receive honorable mention:

The Tired Woman, by Max Michelson (February).

Morning Hymn and *The Smoke Prayer*, by Frank S. Gordon (June).

Carlos Among the Candles, by Wallace Stevens (December).

Songs of the Dust, by Gladys Cromwell (March).

When the Willow Nods, by Alfred Kreymborg (March).

Moonrise, by D. H. Lawrence (July).

In the Frail Wood, by Marsden Hartley (July).

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Wolverine Winter, by Paul F. Sifton (January).

Le Mèdecin Malgré Lui, by William Carlos Williams (July).

She Weeps Over Ragoon, by James Joyce (November).

Poems, by Mark Turbyfill (August).

Who Is That a-Walking in the Corn? by Fenton Johnson (June).

There Was a Rose, by Arthur L. Phelps (July).

Freebourne's Rifle and *The Hurricane*, by Baker Brownell (March).

Iris and *The Jacaranda*, by Lucy Eddy (February).

Mine, by Lucia Peebles (January).

School-room Sketches, by Florence Ripley Mastin (January).

Snow Monotones, by Ben Hecht (February).

Driftwood Burning, by Zoë Akins (September).

The Herd Boy and *Star-dust*, by Haniel Long (May).

The following translations also receive honorable mention:
Chinese Poems, translated by Arthur Waley (January and February).

Peruvian Poems, by Jose Santos Chocano, translated by John Pierrepont Rice (February).

With the Wind, by Konstantin Balmont, translated by Edith Chapman Tracy (August).

Two Spanish Folk-songs, translated by Salomón de la Selva (November).